

We may wonder sometimes why our prayers don't seem to be answered. There are many reasons why we fail to take hold of the promises of God. We look at one of them tonight. James in his epistle writes that one must not suppose that the double-minded person, unstable in all his ways, will receive anything from the Lord. (1:7,8). What the Lord requires is a single-minded commitment to Him if we are going to act on His promises to us in His word. We see the perfect example of commitment in Jesus.

### 1. THE SINGLE-MINDED COMMITMENT OF JESUS. 9:51

Luke 9:51 begins with the commitment of Jesus to carry out the final part of the plan of salvation. It was soon to be time for Him to be "taken" or *received up*". This word refers to the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, and His ascension into heaven. Because He knew it was soon time for him to die, He "*set His face to go to Jerusalem.*" Other translations say, "*He resolutely set out.*" He was choosing to fulfil His Father's plan.

He prophesied what would happen to Him. Mat 16:21 *From that time on, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.* That didn't go down too well with Peter. 22 *And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, "Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you."* Jesus then rebuked Peter 23 *Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man."* Ie., "*I must go to Jerusalem to die. Stop tempting me to turn aside from the Father's plan for me.*" The writer to the Hebrews described Jesus' commitment to do His Father's will like this, Heb 12:2 *Jesus ... for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God.* Nothing and no one would deter Him from going to Jerusalem to do His Father's will which was to die for you and for me on a cross. Is our commitment to God like His? Have we set our faces to do His will no matter what? Or are we still running our own lives, missing out on the joy of being in the Father's will and on the blessings God has for those who are committed to Him?

### 2. MISSED OPPORTUNITIES FOR HEALING AND BLESSING. 52

As we come to Luke 9 we see that Jesus already had been healing the sick and casting out demons in other towns. Now He's about to pass through the land of the Samaritans. Lk 9:52 *And he sent messengers ahead of him, who went and entered a village of the Samaritans, to make preparations for him.* Here was a marvellous opportunity for the Samaritans to receive healing at His hands.

The rejection of Jesus.

But we read those sad and unbelievable words 9:53 *But the people did not receive him.* They chose not to welcome Him among them. Their wrong choice meant that perhaps hundreds of people in that area were not healed. Jesus respected their free-will and passed them by.

Why did they reject Jesus? *because his face was set toward Jerusalem.* He wasn't a Samaritan like them and He was heading towards people whom they hated, the Jews in Jerusalem. There were many other factors behind the bigotry and hatred the Samaritans had towards the Jews. But they maintained their hatred over the years. Now they would reap the consequences of their ongoing resentment against the Jews as they rejected Jesus.

Ongoing resentment can be a problem in today's world for people who need healing.

They want to receive healing but they harbour deep resentment or bitterness or unforgiveness in their hearts towards other people. They will not let it go. We talk a great deal about the need for forgiveness in our Healing Ministry, because we believe resentment and other forms of negative emotions create physical and emotional illness in us. While we continue to say "*I will never forgive that person*", we are doing the same as the Samaritans, closing the door to His healing presence in us.

Or it may be a sense of bigotry or prejudice. Jesus wasn't a Samaritan. So in their blind prejudice they chose not to ask Him for healing. God loved His people and throughout history sent them prophet after prophet to tell His people how to enter into blessing, but they killed them one after another. Eventually He sent His Son Jesus, and they did the same to Him. Bigotry closes the doors to receiving the blessing of God.

### 3. THE COMPASSION OF JESUS EXCEEDS HUMAN COMPASSION.

We need to remember that the Jesus they were rejecting was not only the Messiah of Israel, but also the Son of God. Here human creatures were perhaps unknowingly rejecting their creator. That's how John introduces Jesus in his gospel, showing that humans can make wrong choices. Jn 1:9 *The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. 10 He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. 11 He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him.* But some humans can make right choices. 1:12 *But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, 13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.* Jesus in His compassion for humankind came and

ministered amongst us knowing He would be rejected and would die at the hands of angry men. But He still chose to do it in spite of their hatred and rejection.

His disciples didn't find it so easy to be as gracious to those who rejected Jesus.

James and John in their love and commitment to Jesus were appalled that the Samaritans could reject their Master so easily. How did they deal with those who rejected someone they loved and admired? They wanted them dead. V.54, ...*"Lord, do you want us to tell fire to come down from heaven and consume them?"*

How do you deal with those who hurt you or who hurt one of your loved ones? Have you wished that something terrible would happen to them or that God would strike them dead? That sort of attitude doesn't do you any good at all. If you go around with the attitude that you want to see people harmed or destroyed, then you become the victim of your own destructive attitude. You are the one who is being destroyed emotionally and physically. Jesus' attitude was to forgive them. He did it even when He hung on the cross, *Lk 23:34 Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing."* How did they respond to such forgiving love? They didn't! *And they cast lots to divide his clothing. 35 And the people stood by, watching; but the leaders scoffed at him, saying, "He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Messiah of God, his chosen one!" 36 The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine, 37 and saying, "If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!"* But Jesus had accomplished the Father's will and would soon be in His presence in glory. The mockers were outside the will of God by rejecting Jesus. They would never be in the presence of God unless they repented of their sin and turned to the One whom they had mocked for salvation.

Jesus would not tolerate intolerance. We read that Jesus turned and rebuked James and John for their lack of compassion and their misunderstanding of His purposes. It was a very strong rebuke against a dangerous attitude. The same word for *rebuke* is used of Jesus rebuking the unruly wind and the waves in a storm. It is used of Him rebuking demons as He cast them out of people. Jesus would not tolerate hatred or bigotry or unforgiveness.

What an understatement we read in verse 56, "And they went on to another village."

It records nothing of the sadness of people still gripped by their illness; of countless weeks of pain that had to be endured; of people bound by evil spirits so that they were not free to live as they wished. And it was all so unnecessary. If they had opened their hearts to Jesus, healing could have come and life would have been different for so many in need. This Healing ministry has been operating now for 45 years in this Cathedral. Thousands have received blessing and healing to some degree or other over those years. But perhaps we might be sad to know how many more could have been healed if they had chosen to set aside prejudice or fear, and come here for help from the Lord.

#### 4. OUR SINGLE-MINDED COMMITMENT TO JESUS.

Jesus set His face to go to Jerusalem.

In other words, Jesus chose to commit Himself to God's purposes for Him, in spite of knowing that the way ahead would be the way of rejection and suffering and finally death. But His death, resurrection and ascension meant that He would now reign forever as King of kings and Lord of Lords. He would be able to pour out, not only His Holy Spirit to come and indwell us and bring us life, but also His blessings and His healings for His people throughout all ages. When you get right with the Healer, you become open to His power to work in your life.

Some of you may be thinking, "I only came tonight to get a quick prayer and then go away with my healing." But God loves you so much that He doesn't want you to go away with just a little blessing or even a marvellous healing, eg., the ulcer is gone; the tumour has disappeared; the back has lost its pain. Rather He wants you to also know peace with Him through Jesus Christ as the One who died for you. He wants you to be His friend. He wants you to know the peace of God in your hearts and minds as you pass all your problems, concerns and anxieties on to Him so that He can do something about them. He wants to help you to be able to forgive those who hurt you. We once saw a woman who had suffered months of deep depression healed in a matter of moments as she asked God to forgive her for holding resentments and in our presence forgave the people involved. It's the time for some of us to stop running away from commitment to Jesus and set our face towards Him. *Turn your eyes upon Jesus. Look full in His wonderful face & the things of earth will grow strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace.* Please pray with me a prayer of commitment to Jesus and a prayer for God's healing.

*Dear Lord, I thank you for your love for me. I thank you that Jesus came and died on the cross so that I could be forgiven and have eternal life. I now invite You to be the ruler and master of every part of my life. I offer you all that I am and all that I have, that I may live to Your glory. Heal me in every part of my life, body, mind and spirit, so that so that I may come to know what You want me to know, so that I may be all you want me to be and that I may do all you want me to do. I ask this in Jesus' name. AMEN*